TV specials capture a moment in history

GERALDO RIVERA: Reports in Dallas for 'On Trial: Lee Harvey Oswald.'

By Karen Ridgeway
USA TODAY

Television's commemoration of the 25th anniversary of John Kennedy's assassination includes footage ranging from family home movies to secret police files and FBI phone taps.

The Disney Channel offers the most extensive look at JFK's personal and political life; it's the only TV program done in cooperation with the family.

The TV rundown:

▶ ***The Making of the President 1960* (Oct. 23, 9 p.m. EDT/PDT, The Disney Channel).**

Producer David Wolper's TV documentary — based on Theodore White's Pulitzer Prize-winning book about 1960's election campaign.

Wolper's *Kennedy vs. Khrushchev* follows at 10 p.m.

▶ ***American Expose: Who Murdered JFK?* (Nov. 2, syndicated, check local station schedules).** Investigative columnist Jack Anderson hosts a two-hour, live re-enactment of the assassination with new evidence implicating organized crime.

MANY LOOKS BACK: John F. Kennedy, left; Lee Harvey Oswald

▶ ***JFK: A Celebration of His Life and Times* (Nov. 6, 13, 20, 9 p.m. EST/PST, Disney).** This three-part, definitive film bio uses rare photos, home movies and news footage, tracing the family back to Ireland.

▶ ***A Nation of Immigrants* (Nov. 6, 10 p.m. EST/PST, Disney).** A Wolper-produced documentary based on Kennedy's book of the same title.

▶ ***Who Shot President Kennedy?* (Nov. 15, 8 p.m. EST/PST, PBS, times may vary).** *Nova* probes the evidence, using sophisticated techniques of photo enhancement and three-dimensional computer modeling.

▶ ***CBS Reports* (Nov. 17, 9 p.m. EST/PST).** Dan Rather anchors a two-hour special highlighting 53 hours of news broadcasts over four days.

▶ ***On Trial: Lee Harvey Oswald* (Nov. 22-23, syndicated, check local station schedules).** A re-edited version of the 2-year-old Showtime special — trying Lee Harvey Oswald in court as if he had lived — is combined with Geraldo Rivera's investigative reporting and commentary. Viewers call a 900-number to vote on whether they believe Oswald acted alone or as part of a conspiracy.

▶ ***JFK Assassination: As It Happened* (Nov. 22, 1:56 p.m. EST/10:56 a.m. PST, Arts & Entertainment).** Programming will be interrupted exactly 25 years after TV viewers were first told of JFK's assassination. Edwin Newman introduces a historic retelecast of six hours of coverage by NBC News.